

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 16 January 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to request you to circulate this letter as Uganda's reply to the report of the Under-Secretary-General and Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, to the Security Council on 14 January 2003, as a document of the Security Council.

It was maliciously false for Mr. Olara Otunnu, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children, to include Uganda among countries that use child soldiers. Pending a more detailed reply by the Government of Uganda to this baseless accusation, I must rebut totally the accusation that Uganda uses child soldiers.

Mr. Olara Otunnu knows the facts. He fully knows that it is the bandit Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony which abducts children and trains them to kill, maim, mutilate and burn their kith and kin in northern Uganda. The inclusion of Uganda in this report shows clearly that Mr. Olara Otunnu does not want the truth and is afraid of facts. If he had wanted to accuse the LRA, he should have made that distinction because the LRA is not Uganda. The fact that he falsely accused Uganda opens his entire report to doubt as regards references to other countries.

The Government of Uganda has repeatedly extended an invitation to him in his capacity as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict to visit Acholi, the district of his birth. Such a fact-finding visit to Uganda would make a vast difference from what is clearly an armchair report with respect to Uganda. Olara Otunnu would not only learn the facts on the ground, but he would see for himself the horrific acts of brutality committed by the LRA, especially against the children. Such a visit would also give a chance to Mr. Olara Otunnu to see for himself the efforts undertaken by the Government of Uganda not only in rescuing the abductees, but in rehabilitating them and their parents.

Unfortunately, Mr. Olara Otunnu has up to now not accepted the Government of Uganda's invitation. He has instead chosen to visit neighbouring countries from where he draws conclusions on the situation of children in Uganda.



I want to reiterate that the invitation to him by the Government of Uganda still stands so that he can in the future report to the Secretary-General from an informed position.

(Signed) Prof. **Semakula Kiwanuka**, Ph.D
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations

